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THE KEYNOTER

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL ITEMS CONSERVATORS

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September 29, 2012

New England Chapter Fall Show 9am-2pm (setup at 8am) VFW Post 1012, 114 Mystic Avenue, Medford, MA (exit 31 off I-93). Admission: $2.00. Tables: $25 for 1st, $20 for each additional. For more info, etc. contact Bob Colt politicalguywin@comcast.net, phone 781-729-6066 or Barry Mushlin barrybuttons@comcast.net

October 19, 2012

Canton Ohio - McKinley Grand Hotel, 320 Market Avenue South, Canton, Ohio 44702. For more information contact Jack Dixie at 419-610-9270.

October 28, 2012

The Southern California Chapter 10am – 2pm CIS Senior Center, 10100 Balboa Blvd., Granada Hills, CA 91344. (Cross streets are Mayall and Balboa, entrance in rear of building).Adm. $2 –students FREE–tables$15. Contact Bob Banwart (909) 624-5297 or rbanwart1@hotmail.com.

November 15-16-17, 2012

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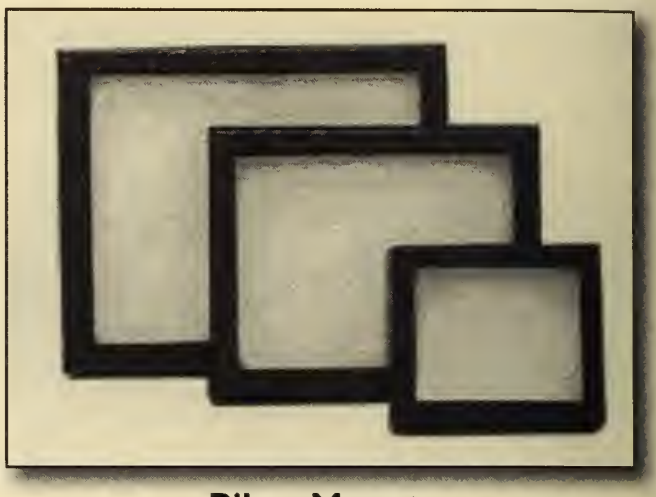
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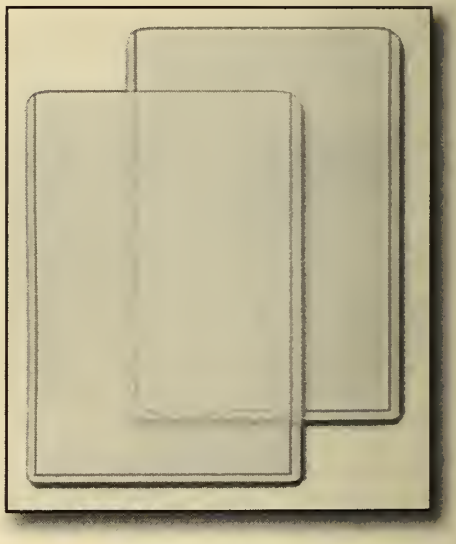
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The Whig Era

THE RISE & FALL OF A POLITICAL PARTY 1834-1856



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FROM THE APIC PRESIDENT



During any Presidential election cycle the political parties like to look back at their successes, and sometimes downplay their lack of successes. As a people and as an organization dedicated to the preservation of our political heritage we enjoy looking back at political history and see where we have evolved from. This issue looks at the Whig Party, a successor to the Federalist Party, and predecessor of the Republican Party.

Formed during the time of President Andrew Jackson, whom the opposition referred to "King Andrew" for his efforts to oppose a strong central national government, the Whigs fashioned themselves as those who still opposed the "kinglike" efforts of President Jackson, especially when he wielded the power of the veto.

The Whigs strove to build a strong central government that would be the party of business and wanted to enact tariffs to support American industries. They also believed the party should offer moral leadership to its citizenry. They supported temperance, public education, observance of the Sabbath, and the abolition of slavery.

Their success was limited because the Democratic Party had already established itself as the champion of the rights of the common people – designed to recruit the small farmers and factory workers to their side. They also believed in less central control of the federal government and the powers it could possibly command over the common people.

During their existence, the Whigs only elected two Presidents – William Henry Harrison, utilizing the Jacksonian model of the common touch with the people, and Zachary Taylor, a war hero but also a slave owner. The party then began to be at conflict within itself – a fight was on for its soul and eventually the belief in the abolition of slavery would mean the end of the Whig Party and the birth of the Party of Abraham Lincoln – the Republican Party.

Political parties often struggle to identify who they are and whom they truly represent. The peaceful transfer of power is one of the great treasures of our political history. We can argue all we want about the direction of our country and the role of our government, however, no matter what the outcome of the election, we as a people come together to support our duly elected officials and offer our support and prayers that they truly govern by the will of the people.

Respectfully yours,

Chris Hearn, President,
American Political Items Collectors.

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



I always had a liking for the Whig Party. First off, they weren't Democrats and for much of my life I took our partisan divide quite seriously. I must admit that my partisan earnestness has been hard to maintain in the face of the difference between what folks say when out of power and what they do when in power, but I still liked the Whigs anyway. If the Whigs had any defining quality it was their desire for a reasonable compromise, something rapidly disappearing from our current political culture.

Also the Whigs' "American System" saw the federal government as a vehicle for building internal improvements (like canals in the 18th century, railroads in the 19th century or highways in the 20th century) that helped link the nation together and build the economy. The Whigs didn't do all that badly, winning two of the five presidential elections they contested, but they were snakebit when it came to the White House. Both times they elected their presidential candidates (William Henry Harrison in 1840 and Zachary Taylor in 1848), their presidents died in office; Taylor after barely 16 months and Harrison after just 32 days. Even if voters liked the Whig presidential nominee, they had to worry about whether electing them would mean their doom.

Michael Kelly
Editor

Features

6 The Whig Era: The Rise and Fall of a Political Party (1834-1856)

FRONT COVER-- Colorful cigar box boosting William Henry Harrison as the Hero of Tippecanoe.

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ILLUSTRATIONS-- The editor wishes to thanks the following for providing illustrations for this issue: Al Anderson, Germaine Broussard, Robert Fratkin, Tom French, David and Janice Frent, and Heritage Auctions.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I enjoyed the in-depth Wilson coverage in the latest Keynoter. Many interesting pieces new to me even after button watching for a half century. I do have a question: is there any fact or speculation regards the button "Above The Clouds/Mount Wilson." I'm aware of the observatory.

Ted Hake (APIC #292)

[Editor's comment: Mount Wilson is in California. The tourist road up Mount Wilson was opened in 1912 and the Hooker telescope was operational in 1917, so the location would have been in the popular mind despite the fact that the mountain wasn't named after Woodrow Wilson but rather Benjamin Davis Wilson.]

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mazel-tov on a great Keynoter which arrived today. I especially appreciate the inclusion of political postcards, an important element to the story of American elections throughout the ages. Keep up the great job!

Henry Michalski (APIC #226)

Another great Keynoter, which I received last evening. I enjoyed it. I wanted, however, to clarify a point in Dr. Fischer's otherwise very fine article on Woodrow Wilson. He comments that he was "perhaps the first national leader since Calhoun to do any primary political thinking." While he prefaces his comments with "perhaps" and I am not sure what he means by "primary", the implication is incorrect. Theodore Roosevelt was a political philosopher of the first order. His writing on political theory and practical politics dates to the 1880's. Further, while President, his significant synthesis of our two great American political traditions of Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian governance, far surpass Wilson's academic musings.

Greg Wynn (APIC #8359)

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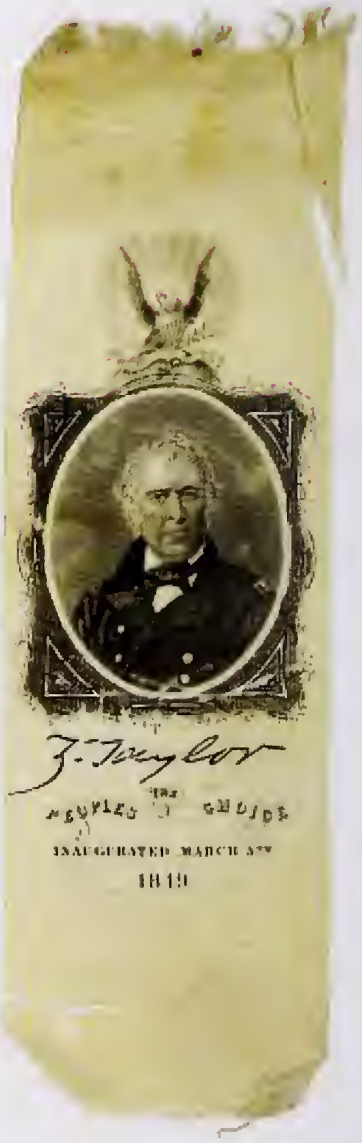
The Whig Era: The Rise and Fall of a Political Party (1834-1856)

By Roger Fischer

The Whig Party enjoyed a life of less than twenty years from its formation as a coalition of anti-Andrew Jackson forces during the winter of 1834-35 until its demise over the slavery issue in the wake of the 1852 elections. During that span it held its own in the Congress, in the Senate of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster in particular, and elected to the Presidency military heroes William Henry Harrison in 1840 and Zachary Taylor in 1848.

Whiggery was deprived of its hour in the sun by Harrison's death a month into his term, for he was succeeded in office by John Tyler, a state-rights Virginia Democrat who opposed most Whig principles and initiatives. A decade later, however, Taylor's death in office brought the party to its finest hour, when successor Millard Fillmore and such Whig congressional leaders as Clay, Webster, and Alexander Stephens shepherded to passage the Compromise of 1850 to avert for a decade the threat of disunion. Yet soon the slavery issue proved the deathknell of American Whiggery, for its planter-mercantile southern wing was even more strongly proslavery than most Dixie Democrats, while its northern "conscience Whig" faction adamantly opposed an expansion of slavery into the western territories. Unable to discuss amicably even the weather during the furor over the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Yankee and southern wings agreed only to dispatch their party to the graveyard of History's lost causes.









The Whigs won two out of the five presidential elections they contested (Harrison in 1840 and Taylor in 1848), making Harrison the first elected Whig President and Taylor the last.

Although most Americans today who are aware of its existence are history buffs, "Trivial Pursuit" enthusiasts, and devotees of crossword puzzles and TV quiz shows, the Whig Party left an important legacy.

It provided a political base for such luminaries as Webster, a blowhard too easily bought but our most important political conservative between Alexander Hamilton and Ronald Reagan, and the immortal Clay, master of the legislative process like no man before or since. It brought to the national agenda such imperatives as tariff protection for American manufacturers and an enlightened national banking system unrealized until the Federal Reserve System in 1913. Its championing of federal funding for such internal transportation projects as canals, river and harbor dredging, levee construction, national turnpikes, and railroads did much to create the sense of a unified nation, political and economic, in contrast to the more parochial localism of Jackson's Democrats.





Webster badges

Its genesis brought into being an enduring American two-party system, for it was replaced by the more durable Republican party. Just one of many of Whiggery's sons to go on to serve his nation well as a Republican was a lanky lawyer from Illinois' Sangamon country whom it is said did much (in tandem with a former Democrat named Grant, to be fair) to save the Union and free four million Negro slaves.

For generations, historians portrayed the two great parties as polar opposites, with the Whigs cast as champions of elitist economic privilege and Jackson's Democrats as champions of the common man. In his 1945 Pulitzer Prize Volume, *The Age of Jackson*, young Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. rhapsodized that Jacksonian Democracy was nothing less than a revolt of common folks everywhere against their masters.

This is sheer poppycock, of course, for the Spartacus of this underclass revolt was a Tennessee cotton snob with a hundred slaves who championed imprisonment for debt and took as his personal hero and role model the French military dictator Napoleon Bonaparte.



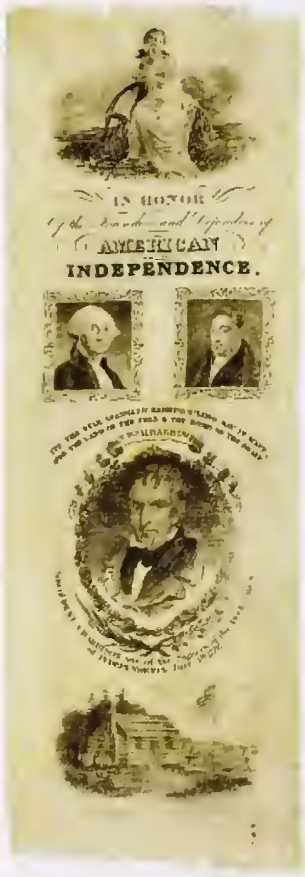
Dubbed the "Great Triumvirate" or the "Immortal Trio", the three dominant legislative figures of the era were two Whigs (Henry Clay of Kentucky and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts) and one independent (John Calhoun of South Carolina). Clay was both Speaker of the House and later U.S. Senator. Calhoun served as Vice President under both John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, but split with Jackson and resigned in 1832 to become South Carolina's U.S. Senator. His state backed his independent stance. In 1832, it cast its electoral votes for Virginia Governor John Floyd, an anti-Jacksonian. In 1836 the state's electoral votes went to Senator Willie Person Mangum, a Whig from North Carolina.

A national party devoted primarily to preserving the economic privileges of the elite merchants, manufacturers, and planters could not survive a single season in a nation of farmers, mechanics, and struggling immigrants, for as Lincoln once opined, "God must truly have loved the poor, for look how many of them he made." A staple of his speeches during his Whig years was his axiom that he stood for both the man and the dollar, but if in doubt took the man every time.

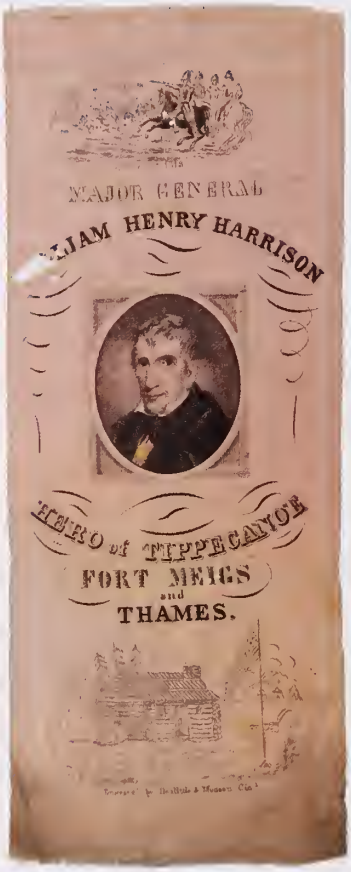
A recent generation of revisionist scholars, supported by dozens of graduate dissertations on state and local party organization, argues that such differences between the parties simply did not exist. Both, we are told, were comprised of men of ambition and economic substance from top to bottom and both ignored or straddled most controversial issues for centrist advantage. Both tended toward the essential conservatism of the status quo on such fundamental values as entrepreneurial exploitation, the rights of property (including the ownership of Negro slaves), and the vast gulf in conditions of life between humble and manor born. As Edward Pessen has written, "In Jacksonian America, idealists and visionaries were not found in the leadership of either major party."

But if the two parties differed little in political organization or ideology, they differed mightily in political culture, as British scholar M.J. Heale noted in his superb if seldom cited 1982 volume *The Presidential Quest: Candidates and Images in American Political Culture, 1787-1852*. Heale, incidentally, utilized as primary source J. Doyle DeWitt, *A Century of Campaign Buttons, 1789-1889*, thus becoming to my knowledge the first noted mainstream political historian to take seriously a collector-oriented reference work. According to Heale, enough Democrats regarded Jackson and his party with reverence that the road to higher office ran through extensive service to party at lesser levels and dogmatic loyalty to Old Hickory's principles (even when the Hero had been dangerously wrong, as in the case of the national bank).

From Martin Van Buren through Stephen Douglas, presidential nominees were career politicians elevated by the party machinery and those between them (James K. Polk, Lewis Cass, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan), rather obscure figures all but unknown outside their home states. Once nominated, these men sequestered themselves from the hullaballoo in what Heale has









called the role of the "mute tribune," while the organization rallied the faithful with appeals to party tradition and the legacy of Jefferson and Jackson. A reflection of this is a pair of handsome 1844 silk ribbons promoting Polk and Texas annexation, one with a quotation from Jackson and the other featuring a bust of Jefferson on a pedestal inscribed with the names of Jackson and Van Buren.

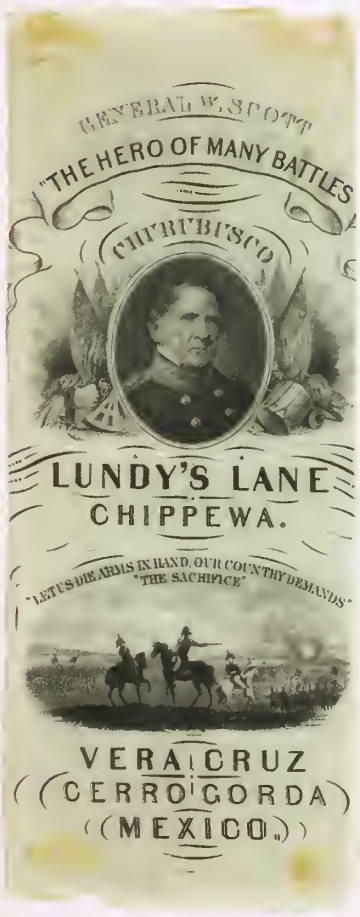
The Whigs, on the other hand, light on tradition and unburdened with nostalgia over majority status in national councils, reflected their "anti-party" distrust of the political class and party organizations in its much more festive campaigns. Of its presidential nominees, only Henry Clay had made a career of public service, and then his illustrious background was more hindrance than help.

Thrice Clay was shunted to the sidelines by lesser men of little or no political standing, military heroes William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, and Winfield Scott. In the latter two cases inquiries had to be made whether the generals were even Whigs.

In 1848, Taylor never provided an answer, but the Whigs nominated him anyway and went so far as to promote him on a medalet as "untrammeled with party obligations" and a bandanna bearing the legend "Neither faction nor party, nor individual interest, but the common welfare of every man in the Union." So the quintessential Whig campaign was a celebration of personality (or, as it were, dead Indians, redcoats, and Mexicans) over party or critical issues. Instead of hiding out at home, Whig nominees were regularly on public display, speaking often if saying little. Unburdened by the need to belabor the nitty gritty of statecraft to re-elect an incumbent, Whig presidential campaigns tended toward symbolism, often downright silliness. Democrats may have usually had the last laugh, but on the whole Whigs seemed to have a much merrier time of it.

This was especially true in 1840, when the Whigs went "down to the people' to elect Harrison in a raucous campaign that after a century and a half still stretches to its limits the human imagination. The Whigs declined to issue a party platform (because, it was said, platforms only encouraged candidates to lie), volunteered no specifics on their cryptic slogan "Harrison and reform," and kept their nominee so vague on the key issues that disgusted Democrats dubbed him "General Mum." Instead, they chanted "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," erected log cabin headquarters copiously supplied with barrels of hard cider, rolled immense slogan balls hundreds of miles, and staged massive rallies and parades unprecedented in the annals of American politics. Celebrations two and three days long drew estimated crowds of one hundred thousand to Baltimore in May, Nashville in August, and Dayton in September (the same weekend sixty thousand rallied at Bunker Hill), and "fifteen acres of men" to the Tippecanoe, Indiana battlefield in May. Twenty-five thousand men paraded in Baltimore, thirty thousand in Jackson's Nashville, and enough to form a procession three miles long in Cincinnati in October.





This mass contagion inspired an extraordinary array of visual campaign devices and the enthusiasm it engendered inspired an equally amazing array of personal souvenir bric-a-brac, toiletries and consumables, and keepsake items prized today as political collectibles. Indeed, a definitive collection of 1840 Van Buren items would fit into two Riker mounts; a comparable Harrison Collection would require a small warehouse!

The tradition of creating campaign objects to influence undecided voters and please true believers predates the genesis of the Whigs, to be sure. In their debut in presidential politics in 1836, they seem to have produced almost nothing to promote their regional candidates Harrison, Webster, and Tennessee Senator Hugh Lawson White.

Whigs loved generals. Of their four presidential nominees, only Henry Clay had a previous political career. All the others (Harrison, Taylor and Scott) were famous generals.











There are a large number of beautiful Harrison ribbons.

Yet their affinity for material culture was apparent from the beginning. In 1834, they celebrated their nativity with several silk ribbons, more than a dozen designs of brass clothing buttons, and seventeen types of brass or copper medalets. Most of the garment buttons featured the party symbol of a liberty cap on a pole, a device prominent in the iconography of the American Revolution, useful for portraying the Whigs as champions of liberty opposing the tyrannical "King Andrew" and his "Tory" Democrats.

Echoing this theme were medalets reading "True Whigs of 76 and 34" and ribbons picturing George Washington, the ultimate Whig Icon (less for his Federalist leanings than for his Revolutionary heroics and stature as our premier non-political soldier-statesman).

Some tokens struck by Robert Lovett of New York for local distribution celebrated Whig Triumphs in the April, 1834 municipal elections or promoted gubernatorial hopefuls Gulian Verplanck and William Henry Seward. These latter pieces may well have been our first "locals."

Other 1834 Whig medalets mocked Jackson's removal of federal monies from the Bank of the United States, portraying King Andrew as an irresponsible tyrant and pretentious ass whose Bank vendetta threatened both the economy and the Constitution. These may well have been our first "cause" items. Some featured running hogs and Congressman Samuel Beardsley's unfortunate exhortation, "Perish credit, perish commerce." Others portrayed jackasses branded "LL.D.," lampooning the awarding of an honorary Harvard degree to the allegedly illiterate Tennessean. These tokens disprove the commonplace assertion that Thomas Nast created the Democratic donkey symbol four decades later.

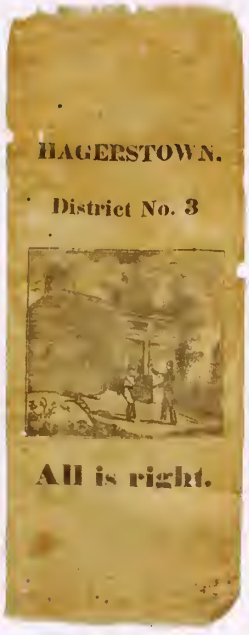
When Van Buren predictably followed party tradition rather than common sense in the wake of the Panic of 1837 by refusing to revive the national bank, one result was another crop of Whig protest items. Senator Thomas Hart Benton's loathing for paper money was so fierce that he was nicknamed "Old Bullion." Gold and silver coins were known popularly as "Benton mint-drops" and bogus banknotes were distributed featuring "caricatures and grotesque pictures and devices, and reproachful sentences …exhibited everywhere to excite contempt" and tokens "in imitation of gold and silver coins…intended to act on the thoughtless and ignorant through appeals to their eyes and passions." To test Old Bullion's fragile sense of humor even further, two copper tokens bore reverses reading "Benton experiment/mint drop" and "Bentonian currency/mint drop." The latter also featured a hideous female bust labeled "Loco Foco." VanBuren was portrayed on another variety as a running jackass inside the legend "I follow in the









steps of my illustrious predecessor." Largely ignored by historians and collectors alike, these satiric items speak volumes about the essentially negative mindset of early Whiggery and a growing gulf between the two parties on the use of material culture in appeals to the body politic.

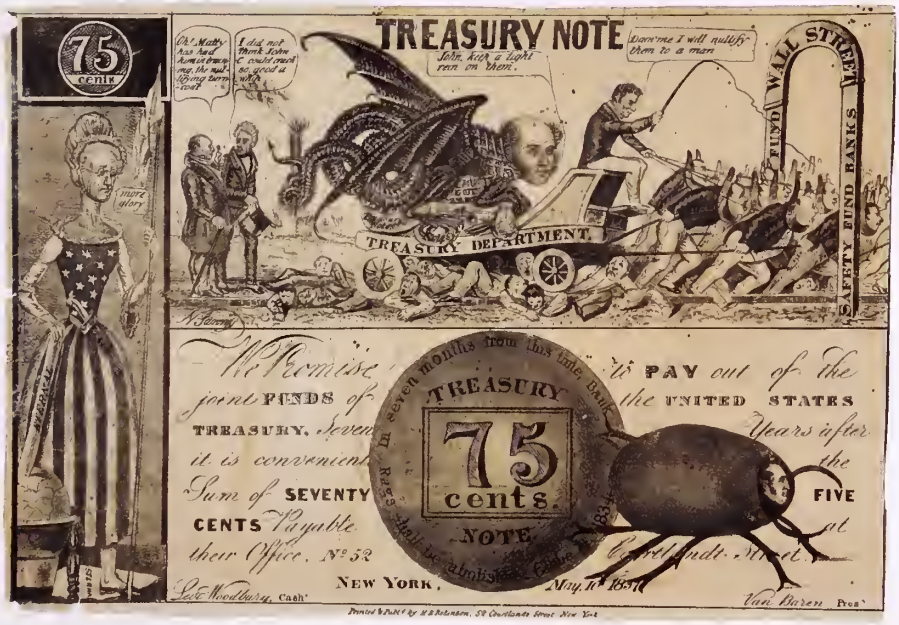
The "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" campaign of 1840, well characterized by one of its songs as "this great commotion," created an extraordinary environment for campaign objects. Included were examples of nearly every type of items used politically in the United States before 1840 – cotton chintzes, flasks, thread boxes, papier-mâché snuffboxes, ceramics ranging from beautiful but costly copper luster pitchers to John Ridgway's "Columbian Star" Staffordshire pottery at seven cents per plate, at least twenty styles of silk kerchiefs or bandannas, nearly as many types of Sandwich glass cup plates, more than five dozen varieties of clothing buttons, and equal number of tokens and medalets, and two hundred or more documented styles of silk ribbons.



The Washington Benevolent Society was a transitional movement from the dying Federalists to the rising Whigs and perhaps the first grassroots political organization.

The massive rallies and parades gave birth to posters, songbooks, parade floats, transparencies, torches, the aforementioned buckskin leather balls, and cloth banners of all sorts – huge cotton ones for spanning streets or decorating platforms and smaller types to carry in parades.

A March, 1840 rally in Hartford featured banners reading "Meriden – Strike for our Country," "North Haven – Know, Man of Kinderhook, the People Will Meet You at the Polls," "Old Milford, They Call Her 'Sleepy Hollow' – She's Wide Awake for Harrison and Reform," and "New Haven, the 'Gibraltar of Whiggery' – Her troops Prefer Tippecanoe Venison to 'Stubble' Fed Beef." "With Tip and Tyler, We'll Burst Van's Biler" rhymed a banner in Erie, Pennsylvania in September. At a Rockford, Illinois rally in October, banners included "Beloit is True for Tippecanoe," "Whigs of Byron – For Our Country we Rally," "Pacatonic – No Tonic for Van Buren," and a striking red satin variety with a log-cabin design and the legend "Public Justice is Certain – Nov. 1840."






HERO OF THE THAMES 1811
GENERAL WH HARRISON











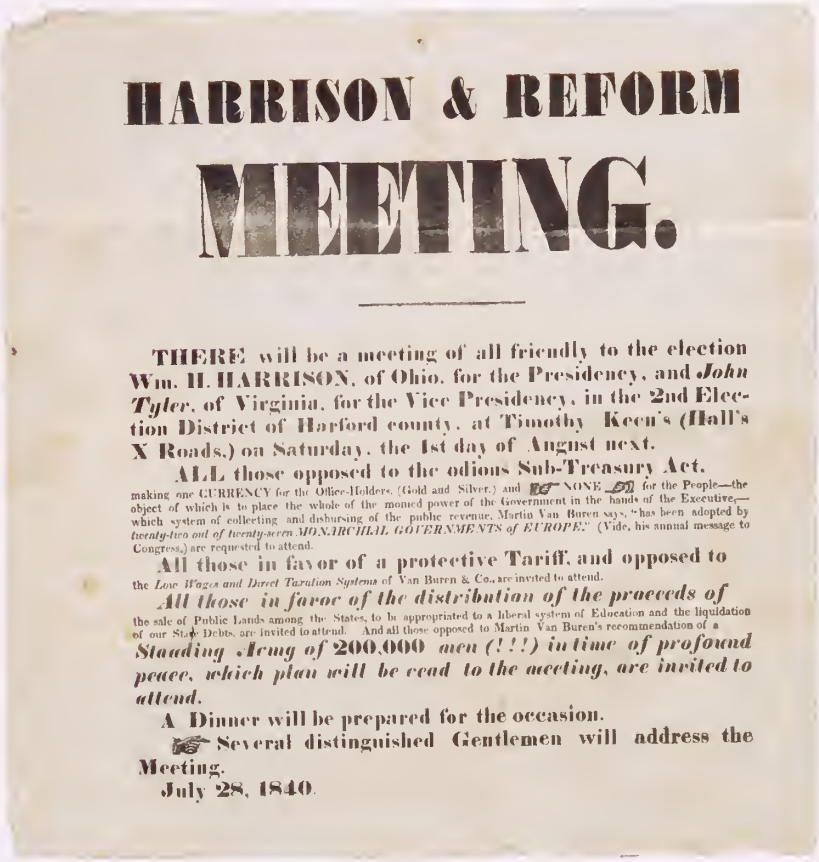


Along with the buckskin leather balls, these festive banners were our first political visual devices, the remote ancestors of today's billboards, bumper stickers, and lawn signs. Unfortunately, except for a few of these preserved in museum collections (and illustrated superbly in Herbert R. Collins' *Threads of History*), these wonderful creations live on today only in newspaper accounts of the rallies. Just as countless silk campaign ribbons were sewn together by frugal housewives for quilt coverings, most of these banners undoubtedly met inglorious ends as dust-rags, scrub-cloths or children's' pantaloons.

Among other 1840 innovations were almanacs, songsters, lithographed prints, stationery, pewter spoons, brass belt buckles, lacquered wooden hairbrushes and ceramic cane heads. Creative entrepreneurs even marketed such consumables as "Tippecanoe Tobacco," "Log Cabin Bitters," "Tippecanoe Shaving Soap or Log-Cabin Emollient," and "Tippecanoe Extract," promoted as "a compound of the finest essences, and a more delicate perfume for handkerchiefs, gloves and the hair, leaving a rich and durable fragrance."







HARRISON & REFORM

MEETING.

THERE will be a meeting of all friendly to the election Wm. H. HARRISON, of Ohio, for the Presidency, and *John Tyler*, of Virginia, for the Vice Presidency, in the 2nd Election District of Harford county, at Timothy Keen's (Hall's X Roads,) on Saturday, the 1st day of August next.

ALL those opposed to the odious Sub-Treasury Act, making one CURRENCY for the Office-Holders, (Gold and Silver,) and ☞ NONE ☜ for the People—the object of which is to place the whole of the monied power of the Government in the hands of the Executive,—which system of collecting and disbursing of the public revenue, Martin Van Buren says, "has been adopted by *twenty-two out of twenty-seven MONARCHIAL GOVERNMENTS of EUROPE.*" (Vide, his annual message to Congress,) are requested to attend.

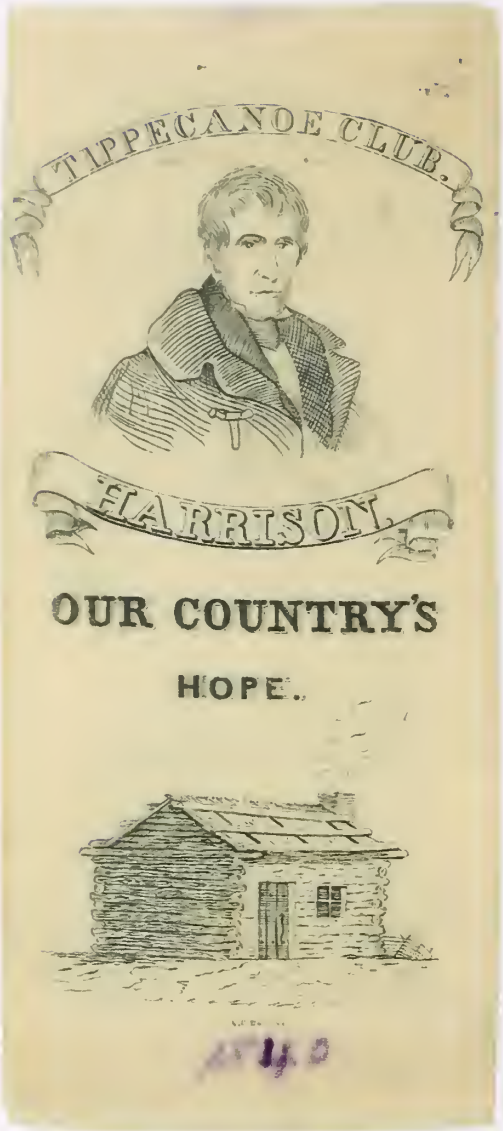
All those in favor of a protective Tariff, and opposed to the *Low Wages and Direct Taxation Systems* of Van Buren & Co., are invited to attend.

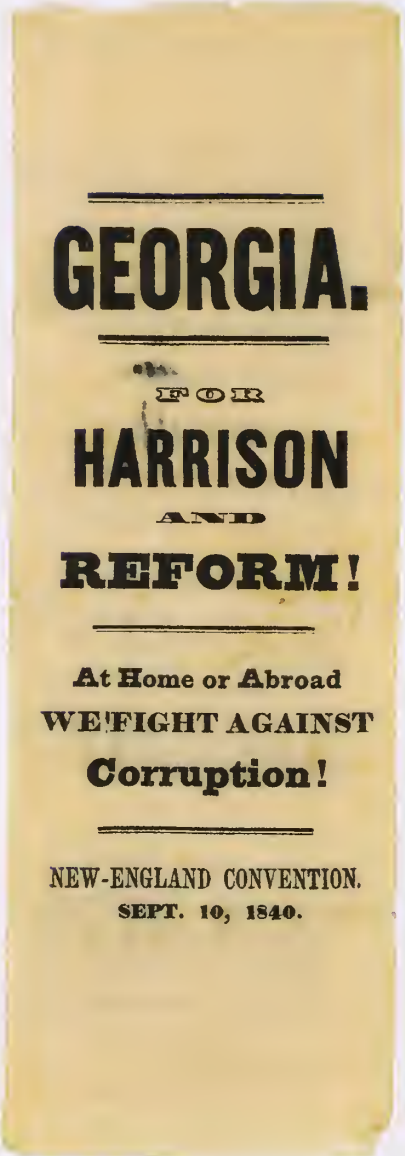
All those in favor of the distribution of the proceeds of the sale of Public Lands among the States, to be appropriated to a liberal system of Education and the liquidation of our State Debts, are invited to attend. And all those opposed to Martin Van Buren's recommendation of a *Standing Army of* 200,000 *men (!!!) in time of profound peace, which plan will be read to the meeting, are invited to attend.*

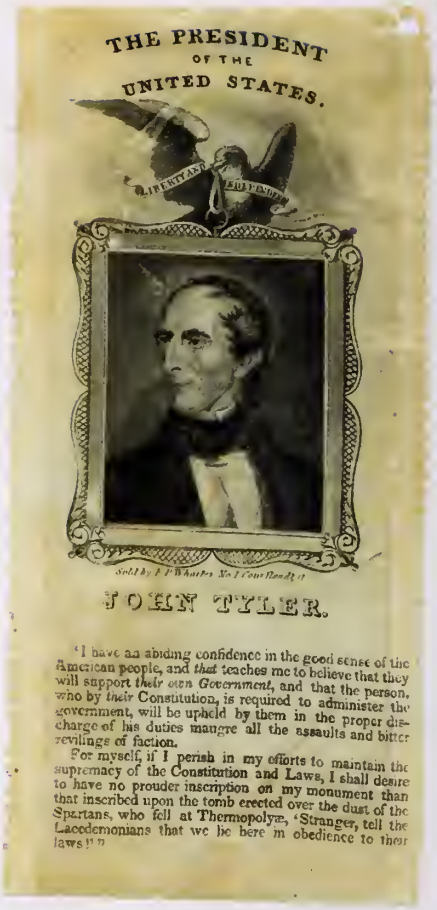
A Dinner will be prepared for the occasion.

☞ Several distinguished Gentlemen will address the Meeting.

July 28, 1840.







John Tyler became President on Harrison's death but was not a Whig.



Most of these objects reflected the Whig strategy of portraying Harrison in the dual roles of military hero and symbol of the rustic virtues of the agrarian West, the precise formula used so effectively by the opposition Democrats in their promotion of Jackson. Hundreds of items featured "Maj. Gen. W.H. Harrison" in military bust motif, often with such legends as "Hero of Tippecanoe," "Hero of the Thames," "The Hero & Statesman," and "Honor Where Honor's Due." Prints, snuff boxes, ribbons, and medalets featured combat scenes and other items including a magnificent silk bandanna portraying him in the classic equestrian pose, atop his spirited charger with saber at the ready.

Ribbons pictured him with Washington, proclaiming "First in War, First in Peace, First in the Hearts of their Countrymen" and "Washington the Father of his Country," Harrison a "Chip off the Old Block." Flag banners waved at the Rockford rally by a delegation of women from nearby McHenry County saluted Harrison as the "Ohio Farmer,



Van Buren prefers "Whitehouse Champagne" to "Logcabin Hardcider."

the Defender of Our Homes and Children, the Friend of the West, and the Foe of the Savage."

Even more commonplace on 1840 Harrison material culture were representations of the log-cabin frontier yeomanry. The genesis of the log cabin and hard cider barrel as Whig icons began improbably with a sarcastic suggestion by John de Ziska in the pro-Van Buren *Baltimore Republican* that a barrel of hard cider and a modest pension might persuade the elderly Harrison to "sit out the remainder of his days in his log cabin by the side of a 'sea coal' fire and study moral philosophy."

After this rather lame example of snob wit made the rounds of the Democratic press, adroit Whig editors began playing it up as a slur by effete "Eastern officeholders' pimps" against common country people. Within weeks they were portraying the campaign as a holy crusade for "virtues that dwell in obscurity – of the hopes of the humble – of the privations of the poor – of toil and danger – of perseverance and patient endurance – of hospitality and charity and frugality" and transforming their aristocratic nominee with the palatial Ohio River mansion into a frontier farmer slaking his thirst with hard cider after plowing the north forty!

Soon New York socialite Philip Hone was sporting buckskins, Webster was weeping in public over the "edifying lessons" of log cabins, and Philadelphia devotees of such proletarian causes as the tariff and national bank were wearing ribbons that read "Arise! Ye hard-handed inmates of our country's Log Cabins, and put to rout a corrupt and venal administration." As I observed in *Tippecanoe and Trinkets Too*, "In American political imagery absurdity has rarely been a barrier to effectiveness."

Absurd or not, the log cabin was superb political symbolism, embodying (as did the split rails of a real log-cabin-ite later) the dignity of free labor and the common folks who performed it, the spirit of the West, and the American passage from a hardscrabble wilderness to a land of bounteous opportunity. It was also splendidly suited to material culture.

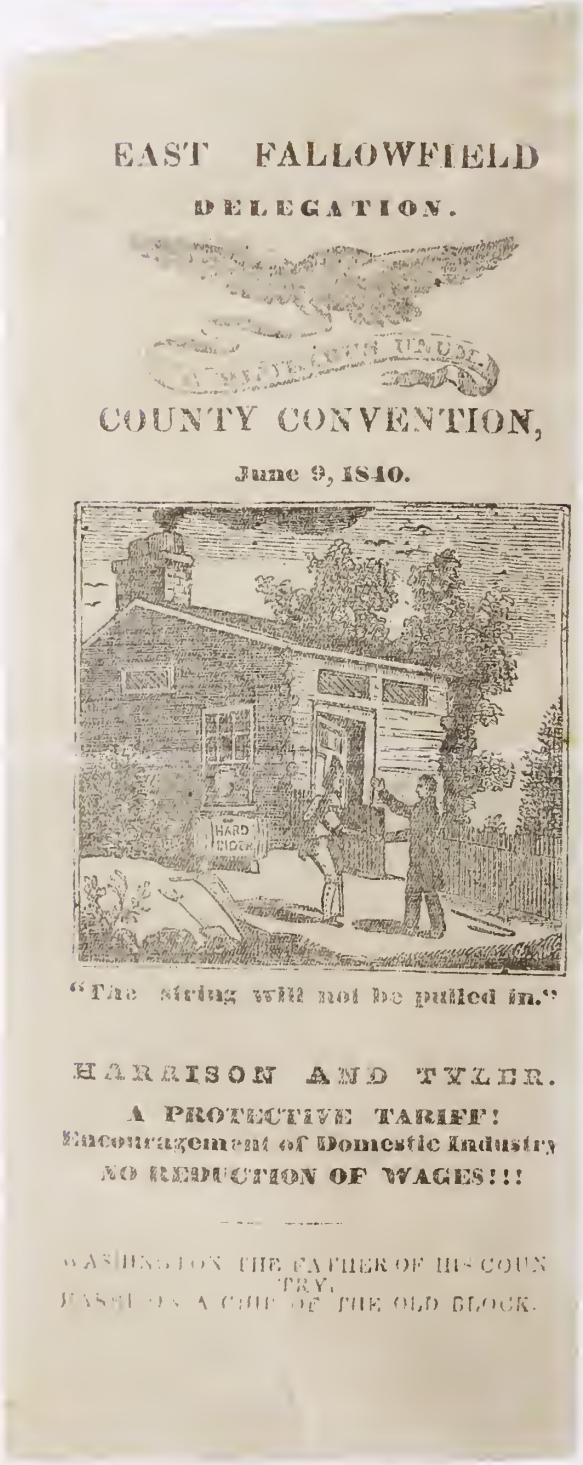








Campaign letterhead from 1840.



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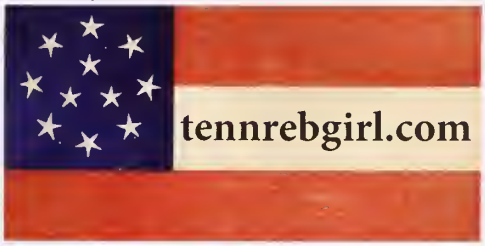


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In January, illuminated log cabin transparencies designed by Harrisburg Whigs Richard S. Elliott and Thomas Elder elicited an emotional response and soon, throughout Whigdom log-built parade refreshment stands served hard cider and other beverages. Campaign headquarters sprang up, invariably equipped with a barrel of hard cider.

Log cabin floats enlivened parades. One in Baltimore carried some two dozen revelers in buckskins quaffing hard cider as they roasted raccoons and possums over an open fire. A large one in Springfield, Illinois, carried Lincoln and some eighty cohorts. Smaller ones were built to do double duty as parade floats, then knocked down into booths to serve thirsty marchers and spectators. Whig songsters featured such airs as the "Log Cabin Waltz" and "Log Cabin Quick Step." "Log Cabin Bitters" came bottled in little figural glass log-cabin bottles, as did whiskey marketed by the E.C. Booz Distillery in Philadelphia that became so popular that the word "booze" lives on in the American vernacular.

The log cabin was a standard fixture on most 1840 Harrison ribbons, medalets, bandannas, gilt clothing buttons, jewelry items, yard goods patterns, glass cup plates, and stationery, as well as such intriguing examples of early political folk art as handmade pewter spoons, brass belt buckles, and glass tumblers in the collection of the Smithsonian. An interesting facet of most cabin designs is a latchstring dangling as a symbol of country hospitality, a device apparently inspired by Harrison's actual or apocryphal farewell to his troops, "If you ever come to Vincennes, you will always find a plate and a knife and fork at my table, and I assure you that you will never find my door shut and the string of the latch pulled in."

A campaign bandanna portrayed "the Ohio Farmer" welcoming a disabled comrade-in-arms to his humble cabin as another figure tapped one of three cider barrels. Even on little gilt buttons smaller than a half inch in size, the latchstring is visible.

Cider barrels were almost equally ubiquitous, as components of cabin scenes or by themselves. Figural wooden barrels topped parade standards. Ceramic barrels were made to use as cane heads. A banner rhymed "Van Buren is running, Hard cider is coming." A ribbon taunted "Hard Cider – Not so hard as Van Burenism." Campaign songs included the "Hard Cider Quick Step." The beverage itself was copiously dispensed at rallies and in log cabin campaign headquarters, to the point where Democratic editors routinely issued pious warnings of the threat to civic virtue posed by drunken Harrison loyalists. One Whig who shared such concerns was the engraver of a handmade token in the Smithsonian collection that featured both a log cabin and the advice "Drink no Spirit/Say thy Prayers/Read the Bible/Avoid Bad Company."



Banners, pitchers, bandannas, ribbons, and other items proclaimed Harrison the "Ohio Farmer, "Farmer of North Bend," and "Ohio Ploughman." A handmade banner declaring Lyme, New Hampshire "the soil where Locofocoism Can't Flourish." portrayed Harrison with team and plow. Belaboring the parallel to the legendary Cincinnatus, who had reluctantly left his beloved farm to save the Roman Republic, were a token inscribed "He Leaves the Plough to Save his County" and a flag banner featuring Old Tip with shovel in hand by his cabin and the legend "So long as the leaders of Rome were taken from the plough, to the plough were they willing to return." A silk ribbon read "A Frequent Change of Rulers is the Soul of Republicanism," surely one of the most piously phrased pleas to "throw the rascals out" in the annals of American politics!

Among the thousand or more known Harrison items, those calling attention to key issues were few and far between, except for a few Philadelphia ribbons promoting the tariff and national bank. Banners handmade by local partisans decried hard times wrought by Jackson and Van Buren. Slogans included "Harrison & Tyler and no reduction in the prices of labour" and "Harrison the Poor Man's Friend – We Want Work."

A banner made for the October Cincinnati demonstration read "Matty's Policy, 12-1/2 cts. a day and French soup – OUR policy, 2 Dolls. a day and Roast Beef." More creative was a Vermillion County, Illinois commentary at the Tippecanoe rally on the Van Buren fiscal legacy. To a battered gig with signs reading "A Picture of the Times" was hitched a skeletal horse that "Looked as if he had been mortgaged to the buzzards, but had by some accident delayed Death's Gasp."

If the Whigs acquired an increased appreciation for symbolic appeals and material culture from their maiden victory in presidential politics, the reaction of the defeated Democracy was one of unconcealed loathing and disgust. From the Hermitage Jackson characterized the Whig campaign as "log cabin, hard cider and con humbuggery" and Van Buren sourly attributed his defeat to "the debaucheries of a political Saturnalia, in which reason and justice had been derided."

It is clear from condescending accounts in the Democratic press throughout the campaign that the Van Burenites were completely convinced that such obnoxious gaucherie would be repudiated by the citizenry, and when it wasn't, failed to follow the Whig example of learning from past mistakes. The party platform in 1844 condemned "factitious symbols" and "displays and appeals insulting to the judgment and subversive to the intellect of the people." That this was more than sour-grapes rhetoric is reflected by the fact that not until Grover Cleveland's 1884 campaign did a Democratic candidacy rival its Whig or Republican opponent's in the variety and quantity of items produced.

1844 provides an excellent case in point. Although the campaign of 1844 was far richer in material culture than Van Buren's had been, this is almost exclusively the result of opportunistic vendors producing items to appeal to both camps. Even so, despite a nominee sufficiently Jacksonian and sufficiently obscure to make Polk a natural for symbolic appeals—in sharp contrast to the veteran national statesman Henry Clay – the Tennessean dubbed "Young Hickory" inspired far fewer campaign items than did his Whig adversary.

Again in 1844 Whig activists promoted their ticket with such massive processions and rallies as the May 2 nomination extravaganza in Baltimore and the September 29 barbecue in Dayton, Ohio, inspiring festive handmade and mass produced banners, floats, transparencies, parade flags, massive buckskin leather balls, and more than one hundred known varieties of silk ribbons. Additionally, Clay and Theodore Frelinghuysen supporters could purchase from enterprising vendors nearly fifty types of medalets, several styles of metal clothing buttons, brass shell badges and other types of lapel devices, Sandwich glass cup plates, prints song sheets, stationery, flasks, cigar cases and snuff boxes, even figural ceramic cane heads and clay pipes – nearly all of the different varieties of keepsake memorabilia produced for the "great commotion" four years before.





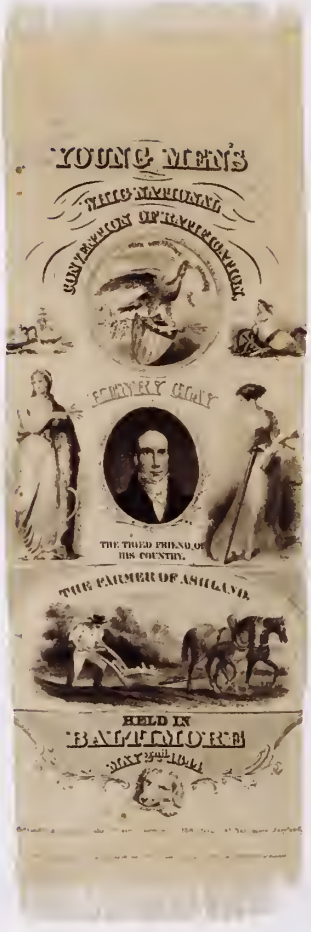
An exception was the absence in 1844 of figural glass bottles containing cologne, whiskey and bitters – understandable in light of the difficulty inherent in molding bottles in the likeness of Clay's Ashland plantation manor and its diminished symbolic appeal compared to the humble log cabin. Despite its lack of innovations, 1844 was a bellwether year for political material culture, for it did much to establish it as a regular feature of presidential campaigns instead of a one-time-only phenomenon.

In keeping with their improbable symbolic success in 1840, a halfhearted effort was made in 1844 to portray Clay as another good ol' country boy. Many varieties of silk ribbons and medalets featured pastoral vignettes of a farmer plowing a field and the slogan "The Ashland Farmer" or "The Farmer of Ashland" – actually much less a fiction than their earlier portrayal of Harrison as a hardscrabble frontier farmer. Much more dishonest were tokens and ribbons lauding Clay as the "Mill Boy of the Slashes," the nickname invented by Clay himself to foster the patently fraudulent illusion that he had been a "poor orphan boy, raised amidst poverty and ignorance" – when in fact he had grown up on a Virginia plantation with 21 slaves, and two parents (except for a year or two before his widowed mother remarried), ignorant only because he was gifted at escaping the clutches of private tutors!

Other items promoted Clay as "Old Kentucky," "The Star of the West," "Harry of the West," or simply "Harry." Yet another Clay nickname, "the old coon," provided the main mechanism for bringing the aristocratic planter-statesman "down to the people." The origin of the sobriquet remains a mystery, although the racoon is featured as the Whig Party symbol on a number of Clay items. Featured exhibits at Clay rallies and parades were caged raccoons. Tokens, ribbons, and parade flags bore the slogan "The Same Old Coon." And several varieties of ribbons featured raccoons committing acts of violence on Democratic roosters while taunting, "Why Don't You Crow?"

On the whole, however, Whig thematic appeals differed fundamentally from the blithe symbolic escapism of 1840, mainly because their standard bearer was Henry Clay. Since his election as Speaker of the House 30 years before Clay was a leading player on the national political stage, thrice a candidate for the presidency, and twice (in 1820-21 and 1833) architect of sectional compromises to preserve the Union. For three decades, his unusually consistent advocacy of his "American System' of a protective tariff, national bank, and internal transportation projects had influenced the American dialogue over economic policy.



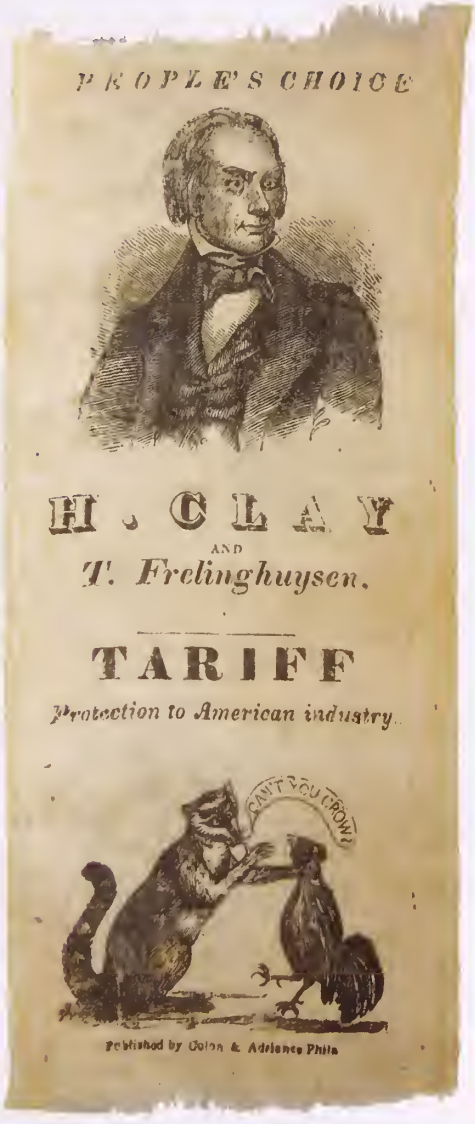




The Clay ribbon on the far right may be the first printed color campaign ribbon in America

Even worse for a Whig nominee, Clay had never served a day in uniform and had not killed a single redcoat or Indian. According to biographer Clement Eaton, he had fired a rifle only once in his life, breaking a bottle on a fencepost on a dare from a mountaineer during an early campaign! With Clay as the party standard bearer, Whigs lacked the luxury of another purely escapist campaign, so cigar cases and ribbons proclaimed him "The American Statesman."









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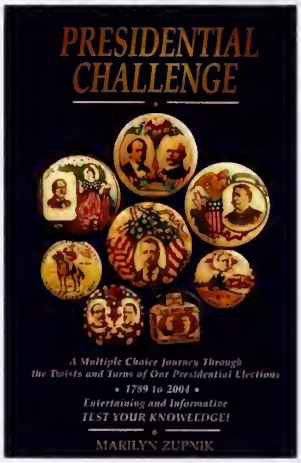
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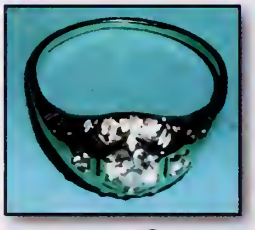
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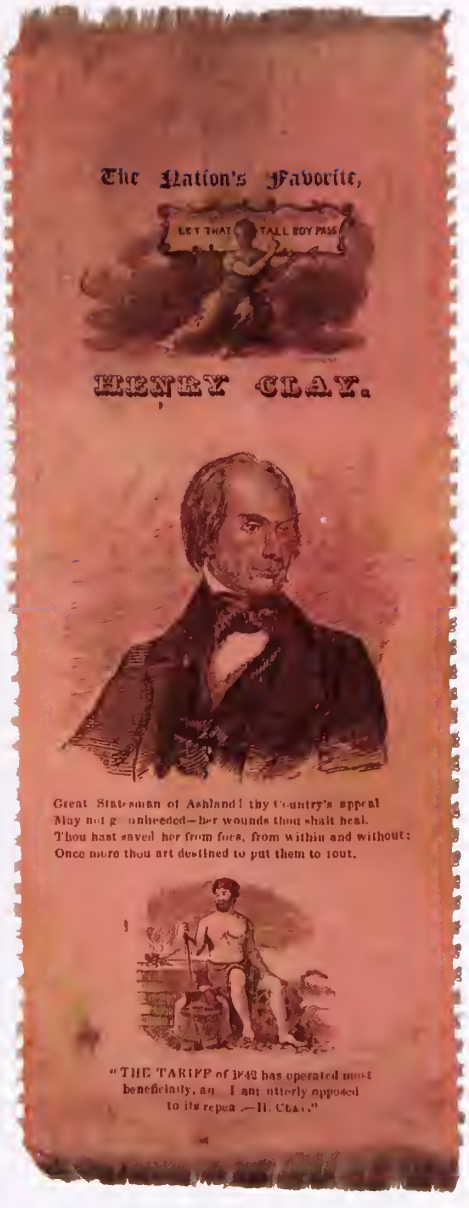
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Once more thou art destined to put them to rout.
"THE TARIFF of 1842 has operated most
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to its repeal.—H. CLAY."




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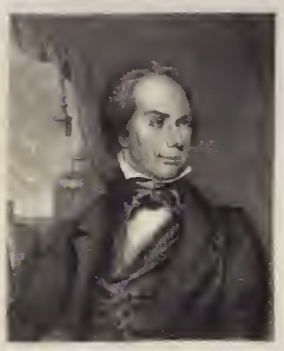


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AND
FRELINCHUYSEN

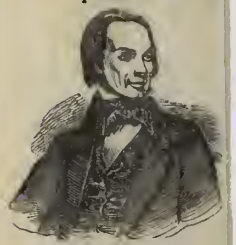
BOSTON
YOUNG MENS
WHIG CLUB.
Our Cause is Just

Our Union is Perfect
MASSACHUSETTS
WHIG CONVENTION.
SEPT 19.1844.

2nd Ward.
"Faithful to the Faithful."
"How sweet are the labors that Freemen endure,
Of which they enjoy all the profits secure!
All ages and nations shall speak with applause
Of the courage we show in support of our cause!"

"A Protective Tariff."
GRAND
Mass Convention of the Democratic
CLAY CLUBS,
New-York, Oct. 30, 1844.

MASS CONVENTION.
WARD 4.

WHIG DELEGATION.
September 19th, 1844.

WARD V.
"Our Cause is just, our Union perfect."

WHIG
MASS CONVENTION
SEPTEMBER 19th,
1844

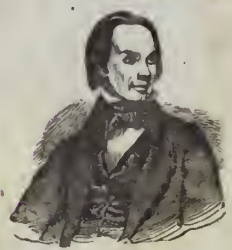
WARD IX.

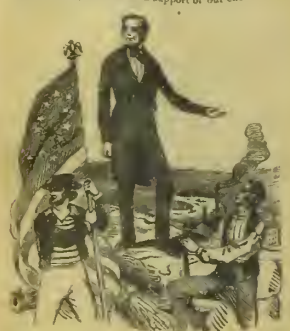
CLAY
AND
FRELINGHUYSEN.

WARD 10.

OLD WHIG
BOSTON.
1776.


1844.
OUR CAUSE IS JUST.
OUR UNION IS PERFECT.

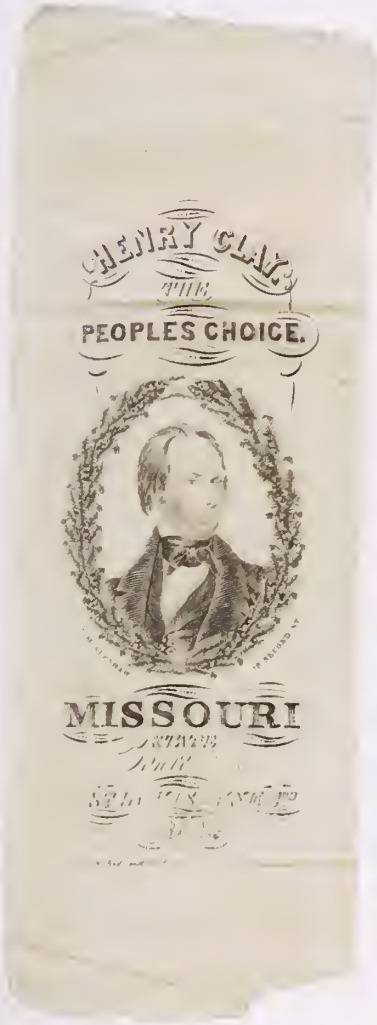
WARD 12.
"Our Cause is just--our Union perfect."

WHIG
Mass Convention
SEPTEMBER 19th.
1844

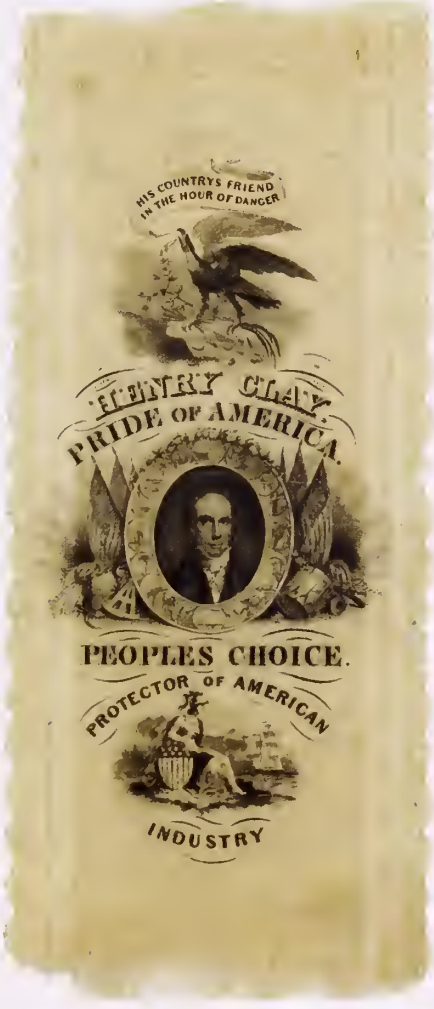
16th Ward.
"Faithful to the Faithful."
"How sweet are the labors that Freemen endure
Of which they enjoy all the profits secure!
All ages and nations shall speak with applause
Of the courage we show in support of our cause!"

"A Protective Tariff."
GRAND
Mass Convention of the Democratic
CLAY CLUBS,
New-York, Oct. 30, 1844.

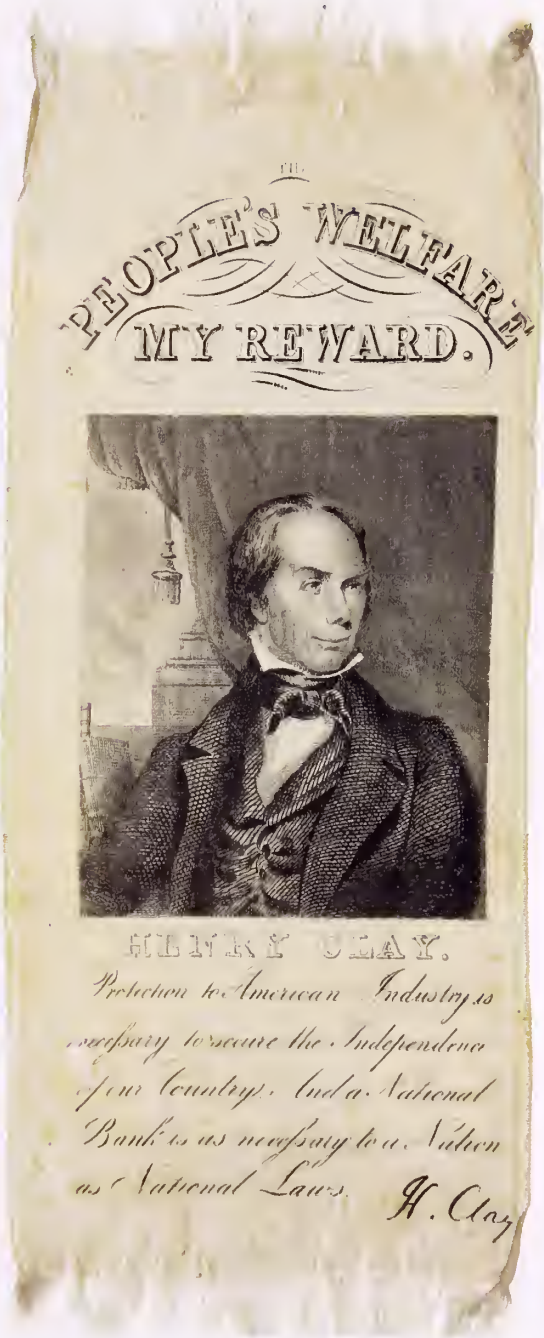
Tokens and clothing buttons repeated the 1832 theme of featuring him in a toga as a modern Pericles or Cincinnatus. Ribbons featured him in a patrician pose with the slogan "The People's Welfare My Reward" or a snippet from a John Greenleaf Whittier poem proclaiming, "The shrine of old idolatries before his kindling light grows dim."



With the outcome hinging in large part on the industrial states of the Middle Atlantic region, a large number of 1844 Clay items promoted his championing of a protective tariff on imported goods with such legends as "Protection of American Industry," "Clay and Protection," and "Protector of Home Industry." A handsome hand painted cotton banner featured a well dressed man riding a horsecart stacked with manufactures and the legend "Effects of a High Tariff." Medalets bore designs of barrels, crates, anvils, plows, and sheaves of wheat; others featured coastal scenes with clipper ships and smoking factories; another saluted Clay as "The Noble and Patriotic Defender of Protection." A ribbon featured an ethereal Clay on a cloudy hilltop (prompting Ed Sullivan to liken it, appropriately, to Moses on the Mount) and the legend "The Working Man – He is to Society what the Main-Mast is to the Ship."







"The great advantage of our system of government over all others is that we have a written constitution, defining its limits, and prescribing its authorities; and that, however, for a time, faction may convulse the nation, and passion and party prejudice sway its functionaries, the season of reflection will recur, when calmly retracing their deeds, all aberrations from fundamental principle will be corrected."

- ***Henry Clay, Speech in the Senate in favor of the National Bank Charter renewal (February 11, 1811) which was defeated.***





TED HAKE

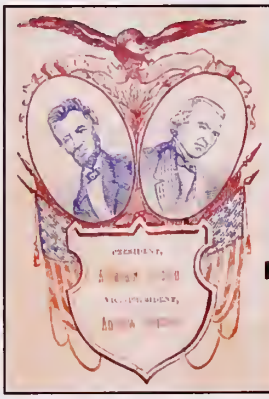
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The Campaigns of 1848 and 1852 brought dramatic declines in the exploitation of material culture for partisan politics. Both were moribund affairs, generating little of the rank-and-file excitement of 1840 and 1844. To judge from the virtual absence of banners, transparencies, floats, flags, and slogan balls in newspaper and scholarly narratives, reference volumes, and major museum collections, public rallies and grand processions were nearly nonexistent.

Nearly all known 1848 and 1852 campaign objects seem to have been marketed by commercial vendors, and the sharp declines in these from 1844 to 1848 and again from 1848 to 1852 point to increasing apathy among the electorate. In both contests, once again, Whig items promoting Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott were more than three times as numerous as those featuring Democratic candidates Lewis Cass and Franklin Pierce.





Reverting twice again to their 1840 formula of running military heroes without the taint of political experience, the Whigs celebrated the mauling of Mexicans and ignored almost all other issues. Ribbons, bandannas, and medalets recalled the heroics of Monterey, Palo Alto, Resaca De La Palma, Buena Vista and Lundy's Lane as if they had been Yorktown, Lexington, and Concord. Taylor and Scott were invariably depicted in uniform and identified by rank, often in equestrian poses that made for some of the most striking of all American political ribbons.



A telling commentary on the two Whig campaigns was an 1852 cartoon circulated by the Pierce forces that pictured Scott in parade dress atop a pyramid of skulls above the wry legend "An Available Candidate – The one qualification of a Whig President!"


Buena Vista
Palo Alto
Monterey


BRAVE
OLD ZACH.


GENERAL · TAYLOR





An 1848 ribbon reading "Protection to American Industry" was the one known item from either campaign to identify Whiggery with a bonafide issue. In part, the Whigs were handicapped by the men they selected. Taylor was so aloof that he refused to acknowledge his nomination, appear at campaign events, or endorse party candidates for Congress or state office. Reflecting this was a medalet proclaiming him "untrammeled with Party Obligations" and a bandanna reading "Neither Faction nor Party, nor Individual Interest, but the Common Welfare of Every Man in the Union." At least Taylor's nickname "Old Rough and Ready" proved useful politically, unlike the pompous, notoriously dour Scott, who was known to his men as "old Fuss and Feathers."

By 1854 the Whig party was dead, a casualty of the rift between its free soil and proslavery factions. Among its accomplishments was the pioneering and perpetuation of material culture as a firm of political communication. This legacy was passed on to its Republican descendants. Nobody witnessing the exuberant displays of split rails, torchlight processions, and trinkets galore promoting Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin in 1860 could doubt for a moment their Whig ancestry. For that tradition we collectors of political Americana should be forever thankful.

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Mark D. Evans,
Advertising Director
THE KEYNOTER
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STATE OF VIRGINIA.

THE PEOPLE'S TICKET.

7th November 1848.

FOR PRESIDENT,
ZACHARY TAYLOR,
OF LOUISIANA.

FOR VICE-PRESIDENT,
MILLARD FILLMORE,
OF NEW YORK.

ELECTORS.

1st *District.*—JOHN J. JONES, *of Norfolk City.*
2d *District.*—GEORGE W. BOLLING, *of Petersburg.*
3d *District.*—HENRY P. IRVING, *of Cumberland.*
4th *District.*—JOSEPH K. IRVING, *of Lynchburg.*
5th *District.*—WILLIAM MARTIN, *of Franklin.*
6th *District.*—WILLIAM C. RIVES, *of Albemarle.*
7th *District.*—ROBERT E. SCOTT, *of Fauquier.*
8th *District.*—HENRY T. GARNETT, *of Westmoreland.*
9th *District.*—JOHN A. MEREDITH, *of Richmond City.*
10th *District.*—ROBERT SAUNDERS, *of Williamsburg.*
11th *District.*—ANDREW HUNTER, *of Jefferson.*
12th *District.*—ALEXANDER H. H. STUART, *of Augusta.*
13th *District.*—SAMUEL McD. MOORE, *of Rockbridge.*
14th *District.*—CONNALLY F. TRIGG, *of Washington.*
15th *District.*—GEORGE W. SUMMERS, *of Kanawha.*
16th *District.*—GIDEON D. CAMDEN, *of Harrison.*
17th *District.*—FRANCIS H. PIERPOINT, *of Marion.*



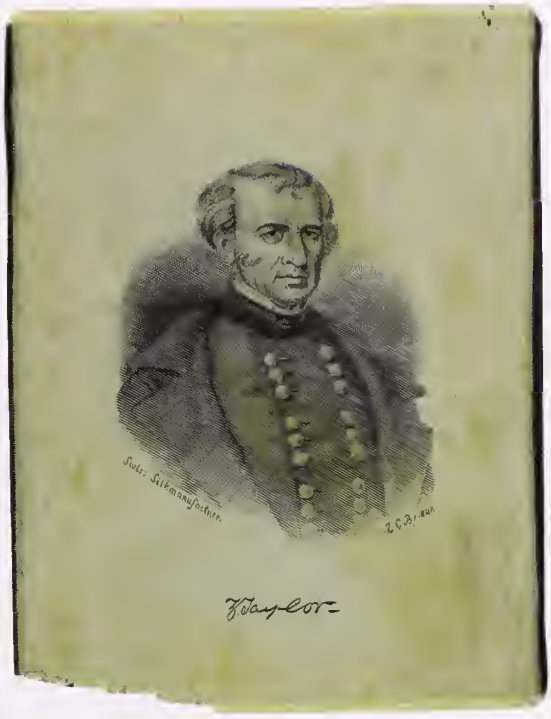
















"I am a Whig, but not an ultra-Whig."
- Zachary Taylor, as his candidacy became more probable.



"The idea that I should become President seems to me too visionary to require a serious answer. It has never entered my head, nor is it likely to enter the head of any other person."
- Zachary Taylor on hearing he was being discussed as a possible Whig candidate.


GENERAL WINDFIELD SCOTT


CATARACT DELEGATION.
Paterson, New Jersey.

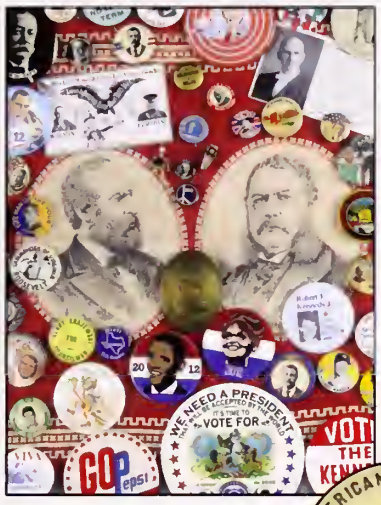



GEN. W. SCOTT


GENERAL WINDFIELD SCOTT

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Keefe, Tom	1867	16TWO1
Kellerman, Ed	16839	EDMUNDKELLERMAN
Kellerman, Phil	14635	KELLERHOPE
Kvietkauskas, Teresa	798	TERESAK978
McClure, Ken	4383	GROOVYDUDE
Mongeau, Victor	14131	LEGACYAMERICANA
Ottaway, Hal	35	TAOS
Price, Bren T.	3965	BTP45
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Westerman, Bob	6359	KYGOV

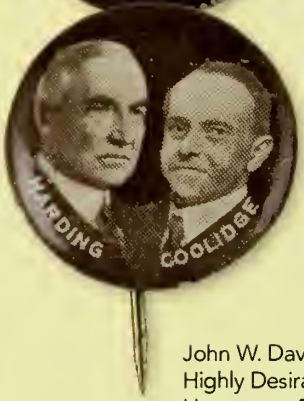
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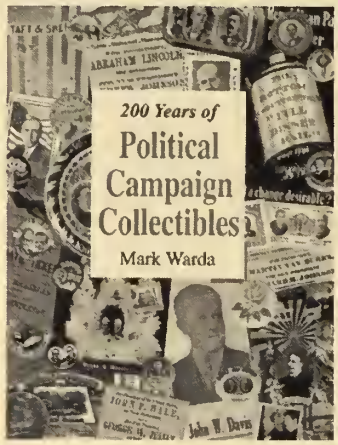
In looking over my stock it looks like I could make up at least 4 different sets of 100 different from 1940-2012. If you could wait a couple weeks I could probably come up with 600 or 700 different (or more). The more you buy, the more expensive buttons I'll add in.

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